



Fire and Life Safety Bulletin

February 2011

804-646-6640

Poison Prevention Week— March 20-26, 2011

More than 2 million poisonings are reported each year to Poison Control Centers across the country. More than 90 percent of these poisonings occur in the home. Here are some problem products:

Ice Melt Products— many calls are received about children who put ice melt crystals into their mouths. Usually this does not cause problems but some chemicals can cause irritation. If a child swallows a piece of rock salt or another ice melting crystal, wipe out the child's mouth, give a small glass of milk or water and wash the child's hands. Call the poison center at 1-800-222-1222. Pets can develop dryness and irritation on their paws and skin if they walk through ice melting chemicals. Wipe all product off their paws and fur as soon as they come inside. Remove residue by carefully washing. A pet can swallow enough of the chemicals to poison themselves. Contact your veterinarian right away for direction.

Acetaminophen—is a safe and effective pain reliever when taken according to label instructions, but in an overdose, it is a leading cause of liver damage and death. Part of the problem is there are no early symptoms to indicate trouble. Here are some tips to keep you and your family safe:

- Take only the amount recommended on the label.
- Do not take more than one product containing acetaminophen at a time.
- Do not give adult-strength acetaminophen to children. Use a children's preparation and give the correct amount for your child's age and weight.
- If you drink alcohol regularly, ask your health care provider if acetaminophen is a safe drug for you.
- Be sure that everyone who gives medicine to a child knows the schedule and coordinated dosing.
- Be sure that all forms of acetaminophen and all medicines are locked up high, in the original containers with securely closed caps so that children cannot swallow them.

Carbon Monoxide—is a gas produced when ordinary fuels burn. It is colorless and odorless. When you breathe it in, carbon monoxide prevents your blood cells from carrying enough oxygen. The brain and heart suffer quickly, but all body organs are harmed by lack of oxygen. Even low levels can have long lasting effects. Eliminate this deadly poison from your home by:

- ☐ Having every appliance that burns gas, wood or kerosene inspected annually.
- ☐ Do not use gasoline powered tools and engines indoors.
- ☐ Making sure exhaust fumes from generators cannot enter your home.
- ☐ Never leave a car running in an attached garage even if the garage door is open.
- ☐ Clear snow from around vents and pipes such as clothes dryer vents and car exhaust pipes.
- ☐ Do not try to heat your home by turning on a gas oven.
- ☐ Never use charcoal or portable fuel-burning camping equipment inside a home, garage, or tent.

Detect carbon monoxide by installing a carbon monoxide detector in the hallway near every sleeping area. Follow installation instructions, but usually carbon monoxide alarms should be placed on the wall about five feet above the ground. If the alarm sounds, leave the home immediately and call your local fire department.

Suspect carbon monoxide poisoning when:

- * Headaches, nausea and/or flu-like symptoms clear up when you go outdoors.
- * Several people develop symptoms of headache, nausea and fatigue or drowsiness at the same time.

If you suspect carbon monoxide poisoning, get everyone outside the structure and call 911.

New Survey Finds Americans Typically Misjudge Fire Risks

A nationwide survey conducted by Society of Fire Protection Engineers (SFPE) revealed that 70% of Americans feel safer from fire at home than in a commercial high-rise building and another 24% feel no difference in their safety. Federal government statistics confirm that in 2009 there were 356,200 residential fires resulting in 2,480 deaths and 12,600 injuries. In the same year, there were 89,200 fires in non-residential buildings resulting in 90 deaths and 1,500 injuries. A 2011 survey surprisingly gave similar results.

Though Americans feel safer in an environment they control, the opposite is actually true. Everyone must understand that they are far more at risk in their own homes. Keep these life saving tips in mind:

- Never overload electrical circuits.
- Service all heating equipment annually.
- Ensure you have working smoke alarms on each level of your home.
- Prepare and practice your home escape plan with your entire family.
- Conduct a home safety survey to locate and eliminate home hazards.
- Follow manufacturer's instructions for operating all electrical equipment.

Home Cooking Still Leading Cause of Residential Fires

- > Unattended cooking was by far the leading factor in residential fires.
- > Cooking equipment was involved in 2 of every 5 home fires.
- > Three of every five reported non-fatal home cooking injuries occurred when the victim tried to fight the fire themselves.

Most burns associated with cooking equipment were not caused by fire or flame; 90% resulted from contact with the hot equipment or some other non-fire source. Children under five face a higher risk of non-fire burns associated with cooking.



Richmond Fire Customer Academy Taking Applications

The Richmond Fire Department Customer Academy is once again offering a free eight week course for those living or working in the city. The program is designed to give students a better understanding of the services the department provides with hopes they will take the lessons learned back to their communities or work place. Each three hour session will be held on Thursday evenings. The subjects will be delivered in a fun hands-on environment. Some of the topics that will be covered are:

- Fire extinguisher training
- Rappelling
- Vehicle Extrication
- Fire ground operations
- Fire Prevention
- Ride Along

So what are the requirements?

- * At least 18 years of age.
- * Have a valid picture identification.
- * Be able to commit to the entire program.
- * Have transportation to all Academy locations.



Please visit <http://www.richmondgov.com/departments/fire/customer/academy.aspx> for an application or contact the Richmond Fire Training Academy at 646-4809.

Do you have a working smoke alarm? The Richmond Metro Fire Departments offer free smoke alarms, batteries and installation. All you have to do is call the *Metro Richmond Fire Safety Hotline* toll-free at 1-888-537-5967 to schedule a visit from your firefighters. If you would like, we can even conduct a free home safety survey while we are there. Call today!

Daylight savings time is March 13...Don't forget to change your smoke alarm batteries!

